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Vajpayee Sworn in as Prime Minister

Address to the Nation by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee

October 16, 1999

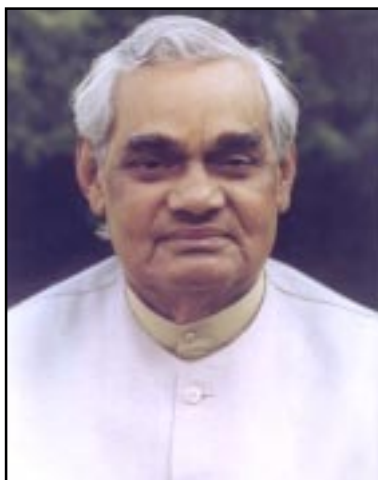
My dear countrymen,

I address you today to perform a very pleasant duty: to thank all of you for your positive and clear mandate to the National Democratic Alliance and its friendly parties in this election.

The NDA represents the aspirations of every region of our great nation and every section of our vibrant society. The NDA, in fact, reflects the spirit of India in all its diversity. It also mirrors the fundamental unity in this diversity.

We may have been sent to Parliament under the banners of different parties. But we all have a common commitment: To give India a stable and good Government.

We are all guided by the lofty principles of Secularism, Social Justice, Social Harmony and Women's Empowerment. Ours is a Government wedded to a common ideal: To create a kinder,



Prime Minister
Atal Bihari Vajpayee

gentler and more tolerant society, free from all discrimination, fear and insecurity.

Free and fair elections are the lifeblood of a democracy. It is a matter of great pride for all of

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Election Results of 1999

(Source: Election Commission of India)

Total:	543 Seats		
Elections held:	538 Seats		
Declared:	537 Seats		
Party/Alliance	Seats won	Party/Alliance	Seats won
Natl. Democratic Alliance		Congress & Allies	
BJP	182	Congress	112
BJD	10	ADMK	10
DMK	12	Kerala Congress (M)	1
HVC	1	MUL	2
INLD	5	RJD	7
Janata Dal (U)	20	RLD	2
Loktantrik Congress	1	Total	134
MDMK	4		
MSCP	1		
PMK	5		
SAD	2	Left Parties	42
Shiv Sena	15	Others	65
Trinamul Congress	8		
TDP	29		
Total	296		

PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS

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us that our nation has once again demonstrated its unshakable commitment to democracy.

Our nation continues to march on the path she adopted when she became a republic in 1950. With the successful completion of the last election of this century, India stands taller in the eyes of all democracy-loving people of the world.

It has been a long campaign. A lot of heat and dust were generated during this general election.

But now that the election is over, we should put the acrimony and bitterness of the last couple of months behind us. And get down to the task of nation-building. There is not a moment to lose.

The Opposition's role in a democracy is no less important than that of the Government. It is a role mandated by the people and comes with a lot of responsibility.

Constructive criticism is an essential input for good policies and programmes. Consensus on national issues is necessary for effective action.

I look forward to both constructive criticism and consensus on national issues.

My countrymen, the world rushes ahead — whether or not we look up from our narrow concerns.

Neither do the tasks that confront us abate. The number of young women and men jobs must be provided continues to increase. Children still go to bed hungry. A sense of insecurity prevails.

The soul of India rebels against this reality.

Starting today, our Government has set itself the task of implementing our Agenda for a Proud, Prosperous India. It is my solemn pledge to all of you that nothing shall prevent us from the task of good governance.

We talk of the 21st century. In just ten weeks from today, India along with the rest of the world, will enter a new era of challenges and opportunities.

We are pledged to the emergence of a 'new' India in the new century.

We can redeem this pledge through collective effort, by resolutely meeting the challenges and seizing the opportunities of the 21st century. We may have been sent to Parliament under the banners of different parties. But we have all been sent for a common task: to make India a strong, vigorous, prosperous and caring country.

To meet the challenges, we have to act now. In the coming days, our Government proposes to:

- Speed up economic reforms and focus attention on infrastructure development. The new century demands a new mindset.
- Introduce new laws for financial sector reforms so that India can keep pace with the rest of the world.
- Evolve a programme for achieving fiscal rectitude by improved expenditure management, deep tax reforms and a new mechanism for speedier restructuring and disinvestment of Public Sector Units.
- Promote investment, Including foreign direct investment, by adoption of suitable measures and removing bottlenecks that lead to costly delays.
- Re-arrange priorities of development by re-deploying resources and strengthening institutions for providing to all:
- Safe drinking water
- Primary health services
- Primary education
- Rural roads
- Housing to rural homeless

In this task, we seek the participation of the private sector.

My countrymen, all these tasks can be completed if we work together.

Let us proceed, as the Gita counsels us,

Bodhyanta parasparam—imparting wisdom to each other.

The opportunities are unlimited. We can use each one of them to our national advantage if we stand united—both in prosperity and in the face of adversity. India's greatest asset is her unity, and my Government is determined to maintain this unity at all cost.

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PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS

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One of our immediate tasks will be to firmly put down terrorism, which has come to cast its cruel shadow on innocent people. Our message is loud and clear: The life of every India citizen under our dispensation is precious. In our fight against terrorism, we will be guided by the principle of 'Zero Tolerance'.

The same principle of 'Zero Tolerance' will apply while dealing with corruption that has bred contempt for the law. One of the first legislations we will take up is the Lokpal Bill so that the rot can be checked from the top.

A broad consensus already exists on electoral reforms to weed out muscle and money power. We propose to soon introduce in Parliament a comprehensive electoral reform Bill.

We often talk of the future belonging to our youth. But, for decades their problems, especially that of unemployment, have remain unattended. We believe that our young women and men will be the architects of the 'new' India of the 21st century.

I am confident that a buoyant national economy will create tremendous employment opportunities. I am equally confident that our focus on education and health will prepare today's youth for tomorrow's challenges.

The Government of free India had set itself the noble task of wiping every tear from every eye, of ending centuries-old discriminations and social inequities. Somewhere along the journey from freedom to the eve of this century, Government lost track of that task.

Illiteracy is a curse and a denial of human dignity. As is gender discrimination or, for that matter, lack of something as basic and essential as drinking water and primary health care.

My dear countrymen,

- India today needs a Government that cares;
- India needs a Government that will reach out to the last person in the last row.

Our Government pledges itself to narrowing the gap between our performance and your expectation.

The Mandate of '99 is a bond of trust between people and Government.

We shall not betray this trust.

With the help of a billion people proud of being Indian,

- There is nothing that we cannot achieve;
- No problem we cannot tackle;
- No challenge we cannot face; and,
- No opportunity we cannot seize.

Jai Hind!

Trade Events

India International Trade Fair '99. Household/ Consumer/Industrial Products. November 14-27, 1999. India Trade Promotion Organization, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi 110001. Tel: +91 11 337 1390/1831. Fax: +91 11 331 8142/7896.

IT World 99/Comdex India. Information Technology Products. December 2-5, 1999. Business India Exhibitions, E-22, 2nd Floor, Hauz Khas Market, New Delhi 110016, Tel: +91 11 685 9402.

International Security and Fire Exhibition 99. Security Products, Technology and Equipment. December 8-11, 1999. India Trade Promotion Organization. Pragati Maidan, New Delhi 110001. Tel: +91 11 331 5277. Fax: +91 11 3371869/331 7869.

Broadcast Satellite Communications India '99. Telephones/Radio/Satellite Communications. TV and Radio Broadcasting, Electronics Test Equipment, Components and Subassemblies, Lasers, Fibre Optics. December 8-11, 1999. Exhibitions India, C-390 Defence Colony, New Delhi 110024. Tel: +91 11 463 8880/1/2/3. Fax: +91 11 462 3320/463 3506.

Inside Outside Mega Show. Designer Products and Materials for Architects, Interior Designers, Builders and Contractors. December 1999. Business India Exhibitions, E-22, 2nd Floor, Hauz Khas Market, New Delhi 110016. Tel: +91 11 685 9402/9403/1256.

Infranet '99. Networking for Infrastructure. December 16-18, 1999. Confederation of Indian Industry, Gate No 31, North Block, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi 110003. Tel: +91 11 462 6225. Fax: +91 11 462 6271.

Excerpts from Ambassador Naresh Chandra's interview on NewsHour on Senate's rejection to ratify the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, October 14, 1999

Q: Ambassador Chandra, today the President in particular called on India and Pakistan not to take this vote as a green light to step up your nuclear weapons program. How do you read it?

NARESH CHANDRA: Well, we have already made an announcement at prime minister's level that we have taken a decision not to test anymore. In fact, the announcement was made on the 13th of May '98, by my government. And the Prime Minister of India reiterated our approach to CTBT in the UN General Assembly and also in Parliament. We don't oppose and we have said that we are working to reach arrangements with our friendly powers, including the P-Five - in order not to -

Q: You're talking about the big five nuclear powers?

NARESH CHANDRA: Nuclear powers. So we have said that we will try reach an understanding so that we don't stand in the way of the treaty going into force.

Q: All right. But are you saying, one, that India will continue to adhere to your own sort of voluntary ban on testing?

NARESH CHANDRA: That's true.

Q: And what about signing this treaty, which India has not done?

NARESH CHANDRA: Well, we are in the stage of evolving a consensus inside India. And this process has got delayed because we had a general election, which lasted a long time. The new government has taken oath of office yesterday, and it's a priority for them to determine their approach now and the future on the signing on the CTBT.

Q: Ambassador Chandra, what about the point — or how do you respond to the point that Senator Levin made; that is, setting aside perhaps India for a moment, but that it is difficult for the United States to have the moral authority now to call on other countries either not to test or to sign or ratify the treaty when the U.S. hasn't done the latter?

Well, there are two aspects: One is the treaty ratification. The other is the U.S. policy as enunciated by the President and executed. It is true that non-ratification will have a bearing on the strength that the U.S. administration would have had in persuading other powers to their point of view. At the same time, the fact that the President has indicated that his

policy of non-testing and continuing commitment to the treaty would lend them some weight there. As far as India is concerned, for us the debate in the Senate is a very important input for our deliberations. When we consider about signing the CTBT, the debate in the Senate, the observations which have been made will be very carefully taken into account. But the ultimate test, whether we sign or not, there is only one criteria, and that is the national security interests of the Indian people. It is on that test that parliament and government of India will decide whether to sign the test ban treaty or not.

Q: Do you see, Mr. Ambassador, a United States that's disengaging from the world at all?

NARESH CHANDRA: I would put it this way. In every democracy, both points of view are present in the national parliament or in the Congress. And it depends on which point, what point of view prevails because politics is essentially local, and nobody can blame elected representatives from keeping a sharp eye on what the voters' interest is. So it's a case of a balance. I think in the national parliament, people expect that a much broader view is taken. So there is a balance between isolationists' view and the world view.

Prime Minister & the Cabinet

October 13, 1999

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has been sworn-in as the Prime Minister of India. The President Shri K.R. Narayanan administered the oath of office and secrecy at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. Shri Vajpayee has assumed the office of the Prime Minister of India for the third time.

Cabinet ministers

1. L K Advani - Home
2. Ananth Kumar - Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports
3. T R Balu - Environment and Forests
4. Ms Mamata Banerjee - Railways
5. George Fernandes - Defense
6. Jagmohan - Urban Development
7. Dr Satyanarain Jaitya - Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation
8. Ram Jethmalani - Law, Justice and Company Affairs
9. Manohar Joshi - Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises
10. Murli Manohar Joshi - Human Resource Development and Science and Technology.
11. P R Kumaramangalam - Power
12. Pramod Mahajan - Parliamentary Affairs and Water Resources
13. Murasoli Maran - Commerce and Industry
14. Ram Naik - Petroleum and Natural Gas
15. Nitish Kumar - Surface Transport
16. Joel Oram - Tribal Affairs
17. Ram Vilas Paswan - Communications
18. Naveen Patnaik - Mines and Minerals
19. Sunderlal Patwa - Rural Development
20. Suresh Prabhu - Chemicals and Fertilizers
21. Kashiram Rana - Textiles
22. Shanta Kumar - Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution
23. Jaswant Singh - External Affairs
24. Yashwant Sinha - Finance
25. Sharad Yadav - Civil Aviation
26. Bandaru Dattatraya - Urban Development
27. Jaisingh Rao Patil - Human Resource Development
28. Santosh Gangwar - Science and Technology
29. Chaman Lal Gupta - Civil Aviation
30. Dr Vallabhnhai Kathiriya - Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises
31. Faggan Singh Kulaste - Parliamentary Affairs
32. V. Dhananjay Kumar - Finance
33. Bangaru Laxman - Planning and Program Implementation
34. Ms Sumitra Mahajan - Human Resource Development
35. Subhash Maharia - Rural Development
36. Babulal Marandi - Environment and Forests
37. Ms Jayawanti Mehta - Power
38. Munni Lal - Labor and Employment
39. Omar Farooq Abdullah - Commerce and Industries
40. Ajit Kumar Panja - External Affairs
41. Hiran Pathak - Defense
42. Devendra Pradhan - Surface Transport
43. E Punnuswami - Petroleum
44. A Raja - Rural Development
45. O Rajgopal - Law Justice and Company Affairs
46. Dr Raman - Commerce and Industries
47. N G Ramachandran - Textiles
48. Vidaya Sagar Rao - Home
49. SBPPK Satyanarayanan Rao - Agriculture
50. Bachi Singh Rawat - Defense
51. Syed Shahnawaz Hussain - Food Processing
52. Tapan Sikdar - Communication
53. Digvijay Singh - Railways
54. T. H. Chaoba Singh - Culture Youth Affairs Sports
55. V. Sreenivasa Prasad - Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution
56. I. D. Swami - Home
57. Dr (Ms.) Rita Verma - Mines and Minerals
58. Balasaheb Vikhe Patil - Finance
59. Hukumdeo Narayan Yadav - Agriculture

Minister of state (Independent)

26. Maneka Gandhi - Social Justice and Empowerment
27. Arun Jaitley - Information and Broadcasting
28. M. Kannappan - Non-Conventional Energy Sources
29. Dilip Ray - Steel
30. Ms Vasundhara Raje - Small-Scale Industries
31. N T Shanmugham - Health and Family Welfare
32. Ms Uma Bharati - Tourism

Ministers of State

33. Ramesh Bais - Chemicals and Fertilizers
34. Bijoya Chakravarty - Water Resources
35. Shriram Chauhan - Parliamentary Affairs

The Prime Minister will look after unallocated portfolios. Ms Vasundhara Raje will also assist the Prime Minister in handling the ministries of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Energy and Department of Space. Mr. Dilip Ray and Santosh Gangwar will also assist the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

Profile of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has been sworn-in as the Prime Minister of India. The President Shri K.R. Narayanan administered the oath of office and secrecy at the Rashtrapati Bhawan on October 13, 1999. Shri Vajpayee has assumed the office of the Prime Minister of India for the third time.

Earlier, Shri Vajpayee was Prime Minister of India from May 16-31, 1996 and a second time from March 19, 1998 till date. With his swearing-in today as Prime Minister, he becomes the only Prime Minister since Jawaharlal Nehru to occupy the office of the Prime Minister of India through three successive mandates. Shri Vajpayee is also the first Prime Minister since Smt. Indira Gandhi to lead his party to victory in successive elections.

Born on December 25, 1924 at Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh to Shri Krishna Bihari Vajpayee and Smt. Krishna Devi, Shri Vajpayee brings with him a long parliamentary experience spanning over four decades. He has been a Member of Parliament since 1957. He was elected to the 5th, 6th and 7th Lok Sabha and again to the 10th, 11th and 12th Lok Sabha and to Rajya Sabha in 1962 and 1986. He has again been elected to Parliament from Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh for the fourth time consecutively. He is the only parliamentarian elected from four different States at different times namely - UP, Gujarat, MP and Delhi.

Elected leader of the National Democratic Alliance, which is a pre-election coming together of political parties from different regions of the country and which enjoys a comfortable backing and support of the elected Members of the 13th Lok Sabha, Shri Vajpayee was earlier elected leader of his own Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) parliamentary party which has also again emerged as the single largest party in the 13th Lok Sabha as was the case in the 12th Lok Sabha.

Educated at Victoria (now Laxmi Bai) College,

Gwalior and DAV College, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, Shri Vajpayee holds an M.A (Political Science) degree and has many literary, artistic and scientific accomplishments to his credit. He edited Rashtradharm (a Hindi monthly), Panchjanya (a Hindi weekly) and the dailies Swadesh and Veer Arjun. His published works include "Meri Sansadiya Yatra" (in four volumes), "Meri Ikkyavan Kavitaen", "Sankalp Kaal", "Shakti-se-Shanti", "Four Decades in Parliament" (speeches in three volumes), 1957-95, "Lok Sabha mein Atalji" (a collection of speeches); Mrityu Ya Hatya", "Amar Balidan", "Kaidi Kaviraj Ki Kundalian" (a collection of poems written in jail during Emergency); "New Dimensions of India's Foreign Policy" (a collection of speeches delivered as External Affairs Minister during 1977-79); "Jan Sangh Aur Mussalman"; "Sansad Mein Teen Dashak" (Hindi) (speeches in Parliament - 1957-1992 - three volumes; and "Amar Aag Hai" (a collection of poems) 1994.

Shri Vajpayee has participated in various social and cultural activities. He has been a Member of the National Integration Council since 1961. Some of his other associations include - (i) President, All India Station Masters and Assistant Station Masters Association (1965-70); (ii) Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Smarak Samiti (1968-84); (iii) Deen Dayal Dham, Farah, Mathura, U.P; and (iv) Janmabhomi Smarak Samiti, 1969 onwards.

Founder-member of the erstwhile Jana Sangh (1951), President, Bharatiya Jana Sangh (1968-1973), leader of the Jana Sangh parliamentary party (1955-1977) and a founder-member of the Janata Party (1977-1980), Shri Vajpayee was President, BJP (1980-1986) and the leader of BJP parliamentary party during 1980-1984, 1986 and 1993-1996. He was Leader of the Opposition throughout the term of the 11th Lok Sabha. Earlier, he was India's External Affairs Minister in the Morarji Desai

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PROFILE

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Government from March 24, 1977 to July 28, 1979.

Widely respected within the country and abroad as a statesman of the genre of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Shri Vajpayee's 1998-99 stint as Prime Minister has been characterised as 'one year of courage of conviction'. It was during this period that India entered a select group of nations following a series of successful nuclear tests at Pokharan in May 1998. The bus journey to Pakistan in February 1999 was widely acclaimed for starting a new era of negotiations to resolve the outstanding problems of the sub-continent. India's honesty made an impact on the world community. Later, when this gesture of friendship turned out to be a betrayal of faith in Kargil, Shri Vajpayee was also hailed for his successful handling of the situation in repulsing back the intruders from the Indian soil. It was during Shri Vajpayee's 1998-99 tenure that despite a global recession, India achieved 5.8 per cent GDP growth, which was higher than the previous year. Higher agricultural production and increase in foreign exchange reserves during this period were indicative of a forward-looking economy responding to the needs of the people. "We must grow faster. We simply have no other alternative" has been Shri Vajpayee's slogan focussing particularly on economic empowerment of the rural poor. The bold decisions taken by his Government for strengthening rural economy, building a strong infrastructure and revitalising the human development programmes, fully demonstrated his Government's commitment to a strong and self-reliant nation to meet the challenges of the next millennium to make India an economic power in the 21st century. Speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of 52nd Independence Day, he had said, "I have a vision of India: an India free of hunger and fear, an India free of illiteracy and want."

Shri Vajpayee has served on a number of important Committees of Parliament. He was

Chairman, Committee on Government Assurances (1966-67); Chairman, Public Accounts Committee (1967-70); Member, General Purposes Committee (1986); Member, House Committee and Member, Business Advisory Committee, Rajya Sabha (1988-90); Chairman, Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha (1990-91); Chairman, Public Accounts Committee, Lok Sabha (1991-93); Chairman, Standing Committee on External Affairs (1993-96).

Shri Vajpayee participated in the freedom struggle and went to jail in 1942. He was detained during Emergency in 1975-77.

Widely travelled, Shri Vajpayee has been taking a keen interest in international affairs, upliftment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, women and child welfare. Some of his travels abroad include visits such as - Member, Parliamentary Goodwill Mission to East Africa, 1965; Parliamentary Delegation to Australia, 1967; European Parliament, 1983; Canada, 1987; Indian delegation to Commonwealth Parliamentary Association meetings held in Canada, 1966 and 1994, Zambia, 1980, Isle of Man 1984, Indian delegation to Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference, Japan, 1974; Sri Lanka, 1975; Switzerland, 1984; Indian Delegation to the UN General Assembly, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1994; Leader, Indian Delegation to the Human Rights Commission Conference, Geneva, 1993.

Shri Vajpayee was conferred Padma Vibhushan in 1992 in recognition of his services to the nation. He was also conferred the Lokmanya Tilak Puruskar and the Bharat Ratna Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant Award for the Best Parliamentarian, both in 1994. Earlier, the Kanpur University honoured him with an Honorary Doctorate of Philosophy in 1993.

Well known and respected for his love for poetry and as an eloquent speaker, Shri Vajpayee is known to be a voracious reader. He is fond of Indian music and dance.

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